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C O N F I D E N T I A L TALLINN 000633

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [NATO](#) [KCFE](#) [EN](#)
SUBJECT: ESTONIA: PDAS VOLKER AT V-10 POLITICAL DIRECTORS
CONFERENCE, SEP 12-13

Classified By: DCM Karen Decker for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. EUR PDAS Volker participated in the Vilnius Ten (V-10) political directors conference in Tallinn, Estonia on September 12-13. V-10 political directors generally supported eventual NATO enlargement for the Adriatic 3 (Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia) and the need for more EU unity on Russia. However, there were clear divisions between southern and northern V-10 members over Kosovo's final status. PDAS Volker provided a debrief on A/S Fried's September 11 meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak on CFE and outlined the USG's assessment of the situation and the way forward. End Summary.

¶2. (U) EUR PDAS Kurt Volker participated in a meeting of V-10 political directors in Tallinn September 12-13. He also held separate bilateral meetings with Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Defense Minister Jaak Aaviksoo, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs U/S Harri Tiido. The V-10 conference was divided into two parts: one session for V-10 members (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the U.S.) and a joint session with NATO aspirant countries from the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia). In addition, PDAS Volker had a separate meeting with the Baltic delegations to discuss the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. He gave interviews to the two leading Estonian-language and Russian language television stations in Estonia.

Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty

¶3. (C) PDAS Volker briefed the V-10 members on A/S Fried's September 11 meeting with Russian DFM Kislyak on the CFE Treaty. While appreciative of the readout, none of the participants expressed surprise at Russia's posturing. PDAS Volker said he believed Moscow has already made the decision to withdraw from CFE and seeking only to pin the blame on the United States and NATO. He explained that the

rationale for the U.S.-proposed "action-for-action" plan leading to ratification of the adapted CFE treaty (A/CFE) was both to bring Russia back to the table, but also to preempt potential accusations from Moscow that failure to move on A/CFE was NATO's fault. V-10 political directors expressed appreciation for U.S. efforts and reiterated their stance on the importance of holding Russia to its Istanbul Commitments. Partners also expressed concern about Germany's hesitancy to hold Russia to its Istanbul Commitments through concessions on "flank limits."

14. (C) In a separate meeting on CFE with the Baltic political directors, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian representatives expressed to PDAS Volker their willingness to reiterate publicly their desire to join the A/CFE when that becomes possible. However, all noted that the timing would depend on having a "sufficiently high-level occasion" to use as a platform for the announcement. Estonian and Latvian interlocutors expressed reservations, however, about indicating that they would be joining the CFE flank regime. Estonian MFA U/S Harri Tiido privately told PDAS Volker that he understands and agrees with U.S. logic in bringing the Balts into the flank regime. However, U/S Tiido also said the GOE will need something from NATO that it can take to the public, which explains how and why such a decision will improve Estonia's security. U/S Tiido also reaffirmed that Estonia will need something from Russia (e.g., progress on Istanbul Commitments) -- otherwise, we are rewarding them for nothing. PDAS Volker agreed that Estonia's concerns for improved security under CFE are reasonable. However, he also emphasized that Baltic participation in the flank regime could well become a key factor in Alliance negotiations with Russia. If so, he added, NATO members will need to come back to the Balts on this issue. U/S Tiido agreed with this assessment and said

that the GOE would have no issues with this so long as Estonia's "hands were not tied in advance."

Kosovo

15. (C) On Kosovo, V-10 political directors agreed on the importance of European unity, a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), and a negotiated settlement. However, PDAS Volker pointed out that "unity for unity's sake" was not in itself a position. The EU had more work to do to find common ground on a clear position to support Kosovo's supervised independence -- particularly if the current negotiations do not produce a result. When asked by PDAS Volker what the EU's position should be, there was a clear divide between northern (Poland, Czech Republic, and Balts) and southern V-10 representatives (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia). The northern V-10 favor independence for Kosovo, implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan, and believe that the EU should say this publicly now, before delays make the situation worse. In contrast, southern V-10 countries want more time for negotiations -- even if it means pushing back the December 10 deadline if there is no agreement between Serbs and Kosovars. The southern V-10 made clear that a UNSCR is absolutely necessary for any final settlement to be legal. PDAS Volker reiterated the U.S. position that the status quo cannot be maintained indefinitely and that time is running out. Slovenia, consciously wearing its future EU Presidency hat, avoided siding with any group and stressed that Kosovo will be at the top of its agenda when it assumes the EU Presidency in the second half of 2008.

16. (C) In the joint session with Balkan NATO aspirant countries, the political directors from the A-3 countries and Montenegro said that regional stability is being held hostage to the Kosovo issue. The international community needs to find a solution and move on for the sake of regional stability and development. The Serbian representative, Zoran Vujic, laid down the expected markers: the alienation of Serbs, Serbian opposition to any unilateral actions, and demands for more serious

negotiations from the Kosovars. However, in contrast to the usual Serbian position, Vujic showed more flexibility and willingness to discuss wider regional topics without fixating on Kosovo. Vujic said that his government's ultimate goal is for both Serbia and Kosovo to eventually join the European Union (EU). On the margins of the larger meeting, Vujic (protect) told PDAS Volker that he personally agreed with PDAS Volker's assessment that Serbia has not yet seriously engaged in the negotiations led by UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari.

Russia

¶7. (C) NATO political directors laid out a long list of complaints about Russia. The Polish and Czech representatives pointedly described Russia's behavior as a return to a "1970's mentality." They said Russia is trying to resurrect a "superpower" relationship with the United States based on a zero-sum game. All participants expressed concern about the EU's inability to speak to Moscow with one voice, especially on energy security. There was not much optimism that Europe would be able to overcome its internal divisions in order to think and act strategically in the short to mid-term. In his review of U.S. views on Russia, PDAS Volker emphasized our focus on maintaining transatlantic unity and rejecting zero-sum thinking. "The Alliance needs to avoid getting sucked into conflict with Russia and focus on its own agenda," PDAS Volker said.

NATO Enlargement and Bucharest Summit

¶8. (C) All the V-10 political directors supported the idea of an A-3 big bang NATO enlargement for the sake of regional stability and development in spite of the problems in each of these countries. They supported Croatian membership and agreed that the country was moving in the right direction. On Macedonia, there was a general consensus that the country has lost ground recently and needed to get back on track. On Albania, V-10 political directors agreed the country has made little progress in implementing necessary reforms. Volker stressed that we want to work hard to support Albania, Croatia and Macedonia in presenting the strongest candidacies possible, but had not at this stage made any decisions on invitations. He also stressed that the Albanians and Macedonians need to understand that there is no consensus at NATO in favor of their membership, and they need to "put on the gas" on domestic reforms in the remaining 7 months before the Bucharest Summit.

¶9. (C) All V-10 political directors supported offering Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia, either at the Bucharest Summit or leading up to the summit. Political directors from Estonia, Czech Republic, and Latvia were particularly vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction over the decision to cancel the North Atlantic Council's (NAC) visit to Georgia in the face of Russian intimidation. Czech Political Director, Martin Povejsil, said the NAC visit's cancellation will only encourage Russia's belligerent behavior and risk undermining NATO's sovereignty. U/S Tiido opined that the NAC's decision is part of the larger problem of Western Europe's general lack of interest and engagement with Georgia.

U.S.-Estonian Issues

¶10. (C) In separate bilateral meetings in the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and with President Ilves, PDAS Volker offered his thanks and appreciation for Estonia's contribution in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Estonian interlocutors repeated their commitment to both missions. On Afghanistan, U/S Tiido called Estonia's mission in Helmand its number one foreign policy priority and said Estonia is committed for the long

term. On Iraq, Defense Minister Aaviksoo predicted that Estonia will continue its presence for another year. Then, in 2009, the GOE will reassess whether to continue participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). (NOTE: Parliament is required to vote to extend both the Iraq and Afghanistan missions before the end of the year. END NOTE.) All Estonian interlocutors also raised the need for more cooperation in NATO on cyber security. Defense Minister Aaviksoo said that the GOE's goal is for its Cyber Defense Center to become a NATO Center of Excellence. In the meantime, the GOE is moving ahead in developing its center and hopes the U.S. can participate as soon as possible.

¶11. (U) PDAS Volker gave two interviews for Estonian television, ETV (the leading Estonian-language station) and PBK (the leading Russian-language station). Both interviews focused on Estonia's interest in and efforts to join the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). PDAS Volker gave his assurance that the Administration will work under the new legislation approved by congress to evaluate countries for visa waiver. He said Estonia is in a good position, but declined to give a specific date for its joining VWP. He emphasized that joining the program is a criteria-based rather than a time-based process.

¶12. (U) PDAS Volker cleared on the cable.
PHILLIPS